

Message Text

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11/42

ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /045 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6679

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3086

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LAST PARA - NEXT TO LAST LINE)

EO 11652: GBDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT

SUBJECT: TURKI MISSING TO YEMEN

REF: SANA 3054, 3055, 3070; STATE 264171

1. SUMMARY: SAUDI PRINCE TURKI STILL IN SANA, BUT YARG HAS NOT MOVED TOWARD ANY NEW POSITION FOR SHAYK ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR OR CONCESSIONS HIS CONSTITUANCY. NEXT STEPS UNCERTAIN, BUT YARG BEGINNING TO BRIEF FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. YARG HAS FINALLY GOTTEN AROUND TO ANNOUNCING PRESENCE TURKI IN SANA, WITH SMALL NOTICE IN WEEKLY NEWSPAPEOIAL-YEMEN, WHICH ORGAN OF FONMIN ABDALLAH AL-ASNAG. ASNAG HAS ALSO BEEN CALLING IN VARIOUS AMBASSADORS TO BRIEF THEM OF VISIT. ASNAG BRIEFING NOTES PRESENCE OF SAUDI REP ONLY IN PASSING, AND GIVES NO CLEAR IDEA THAT HE MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN MEDIATION EFFORT SELF-APPOINTED OR OTHERWISE. BASICALLY ASNAJ IS TELLING DIPLOMATS HERE THAT GOVT HAS PROBLEM WITH TRIBES, THAT IT IS DETERMINED TO SOLVE IT AS FUNDAMENTAL OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAM OF MODERNIZATION AND CENTRALIZATION, AND IT HAD LARGELY SUCCEDED. ASNAJ THEN GOES ON TO SAY THAT SHAYKH ABDALLAH DOES NOT PERCEIVE HIS OWN WEAKNESS, EITHER VIS-A-VIS GOVT OR TRIBES, AND HAS BADLY OVERPLAYED HIS HAND BY FOMENTING SABOTAGE BY SOME DISGUIDED INDIVIDUALS. ASNAJ THEN RECOUNTS STORY IN PARA FOUR SANA 3070, ADDING THAT AHMAR WAS CONFRONTED WITH PERPETRATORS AFTERWARD, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND THEY CONFESSED TO CRIME IN HIS PRESENCE. ABDALLAH

STRONGLY DENIED COMPLICITY.

3. UNTIL BRIEFING OF SANAJ FOR SELECTED AMBASSADORS
STORY OF ABDALLAH'S EFFORTS--NOT TO MENTION TURKI MISSION--
HAS BEEN VERY CLOSELY HELD, AND ASNAJ PREFACED HIS
REMARKS BY SAYING HE WANTED TO COMBAT RUMORS THAT GOVT
BENT ON "MILITARY DICTATORSHIP" WITHOUT CIVILIAN OR POPULAR
INSTITUTIONS OR BROAD PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING.

4. ABDALLAH APPEARS TO HAVE HALTED HIS EFFORTS TO RAISE
TRIBES AGAINST GOVT, LARGELY AS RESULT TURKI ADVICE
THIS COURSE BUT PROBABLY ALSO DUE HIS LACK OF SUCCESS
IN INCITING ANY ORGANIZED OPPOSITION. HOWEVER,
SOME TRIBAL MEETINGS HAVE OCCURRED OVER OTHER LEADERSHIP
-,\$ 43*)3:5 9.3 700945 FOR ABDALLAH'S CHARGES IF NOT
FOR ABDALLAH.

5. THERE HAVE CONSEQUENTLY BEEN NO REPORTS THAT HAMDI IS
PREPARING TO GIVE SHAYKH ABDALLAH PERSONALLY VERY MUCH.
IN FACT, AT SOME GATHERINGS, HAMDI IS REPORTEDLY
TAKING VERY HARD-LINE ON ABDALLAH AND TRIBAL POWER IN
GENERAL. HOWEVER, ONE REPORT WE HAD TODAY SUGGESTED THAT
ABDALLAH OR THE OTHER TRIBAL CONVOCATIONS MAY HAVE EXACTED
SOME KIND OF A CONCESSION FROM YARG BY HIGHLIGHTING
INDEFINITE PLANS FOR NEW ELECTIONS. ACCORDING THIS
REPORT, GOVT MIGHT MOVE THEREFORE TO SET DEFINITE DATE
FOR ELECTIONS OF NEW PARLIAMENT AND PERHAPS TAKE OTHER STEPS
ANTICIPATE AND PROPITIATE TRIBAL INTERESTS.

6. COMMENT: IF TURKI IS INDEED GOING TO WAIT OUT A "RECONCILIATION"
BETWEEN ABDALLAH AND THE YARG HE MAY BE HERE QUITE A WHILE.
ASNAG BRIEFING SHOWS HOW HARD IT IS GOING TO BE FOR YARG
TO BE GENEROUS WITH ABDALLAH. YEMENIS SEE ALSO PROBABLY
WAITING AT LEAST TO SEE WHAT RECEPTION OF AL-GHASHMI IS LIKE
IN RIYADH. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS HERE THAT SAUDI SUBSIDY CHECK
IS COMING. GENEROUS SAUDI COMMITMENT ALSO TO DETAILED
MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM MAY WELL MAKE THEM MORE
CONCILIATORY TO ABDALLAH. YARG PRES HAMDI MAY HAVE TRIED
SIGNAL OPPOSITE TRACT, HOWEVER, BY BREAKING WELL-
ESTABLISHED TRADITION HERE AND ATTENDING SOVIET NATIONAL DAY
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PARTY ALONG WITH EVERYONE OF IMPORTANCE IN YARG. HAMDI
HAS NOT RPT NOT ATTENDED SIMILAR WESTERN OR US FUNCTIONS
AND USUALLY YEMENI BRASS SHOWS UP ONLY FOR ARAB AFFAIRS
(AND PRC WHO OCCUPY SPECIAL PLACE IN YARG PERCEPTIONS OF AID.)
WE THINK YEMENIS ARE NOT LIKELY TO TAKE ANY DRASTIC STEP
IN NEW POLITICAL DIRECTION, BUT THEIR PATIENCE WITH TURKI IS
WEARING THIN AGAIN, JUST AS IT DID IN EARLY STAGE OF TURKI'S
VISIT. YEMENIS CAN OBVIOUSLY OUTWAIT TURKI, BUT IT WILL STRAIN

YAR-SAUDI RELATIONS AND MAKE FACE-SAVING GESTURE FOR ABDALLAH
MORE DIFFICULT. FOR OUR PART, WE THINK STATE REFTEL IS JUST WHAT
IS NEEDED AND SEE NO REASON DO ANYTHING MORE AT THIS MOMENT.
ASSUMING FOLLOW-UP WITH PRINCE FHAD WILL BE DONE AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE.
SCOTES

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